The Business of Poverty in America

I. Poverty as Architecture, Not Accident

In the American myth, poverty is a personal

failure: laziness, bad choices, lack of grit. In the American system, poverty is neither mistake nor misfortune — it is **architecture.** A permanent underclass is the scaffolding on which wealth is built. To erase it would mean dismantling the very structures that sustain profit and power.

II. Poverty as Cheap Labor

Walmart does not function without workers trapped in subsistence wages. Fields do not yield without undocumented migrants bending their backs at less than minimum wage.

Fast-food franchises, delivery platforms, care homes, Amazon warehouses — all rely on a steady supply of people with no bargaining power. Poverty is not an economic “cost”; it is an **input factor.**

III. Poverty as Profit Stream

Where there is scarcity, there is extraction. The poor are customers of last resort for:

- **Payday loans** with triple-digit interest rates.
- **Medical debt** that feeds collection agencies and insurance companies.
- **Rent extraction** in

decayed housing markets.

- **Private prisons** that monetize incarceration.

Poverty here is a **money-making machine.** Hunger generates interest; sickness generates fees; crime born of despair generates contracts.

IV. Poverty as Political

Fuel

The hungry vote with their anger. The precarious vote with their fear. Politicians like Trump turn poverty into theater:

- Stir resentment against immigrants, minorities, “elites.”
- Redirect despair into

nationalism.

- Offer symbolic victories while leaving the structure intact.

The result: the poor fight one another in cultural skirmishes, while the architecture of exploitation stands untouched.

V. Poverty as

Necessary Myth

The American Dream requires its shadow. Without poverty, there is no contrast to the “self-made” billionaire, no ladder of aspiration, no justification for ruthless competition. Poverty becomes the sermon that tells the middle

class: *“Work harder, or this will be you.”* Fear polices obedience more efficiently than law.

VI. Poverty as Desired Condition

Here lies the final provocation: poverty is not merely tolerated, it is **wanted.** It ensures

profits, supplies workers, feeds politics, upholds myths. To abolish it would mean shrinking prisons, raising wages, forgiving debts, regulating landlords, curbing Wall Street — in short, dismantling America's most lucrative businesses. Poverty persists not because the

system fails, but because it **succeeds** in reproducing it.

VII. Epilogue: The Inverse Dream

If football and migration are religions of escape, poverty in America is a religion of containment. Its liturgy is debt, its

priests are lobbyists, its altars are Walmart checkouts and ER waiting rooms. The miracle never arrives — and that is precisely the point. The dream is to keep dreaming, not to wake up.

In one sentence: Poverty in America is not the crack in the system — it

is the foundation stone, polished and guarded, because without it the edifice of wealth would collapse.